

TRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL
PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to the 48th Annual National Puerto Rican Day Parade, which will be held on June 11, 2006 in New York City. This parade, which celebrates the heritage of the Puerto Rican people, is one of the largest outdoor events in the United States.

The first New York Puerto Rican Day parade, held on Sunday, April 12, 1958 in "El Barrio" in Manhattan, was a wonderful event in the heart of the city's Puerto Rican community.

In 1995, the overwhelming success of the parade prompted organizers to increase its size, and transform it into a national affair now known as the National Puerto Rican Day Parade. This magnificent New York institution now includes participation from delegates representing over 30 states, including Alaska and Hawaii and attracts over 3 million parade goers every year.

The great success that this parade has enjoyed over the years is a result of the tireless efforts of many individuals from all walks of life who are dedicated to preserving and celebrating Puerto Rican heritage and culture. Leading this effort is the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Inc. a non-profit organization founded in 1995 with the mission of increasing the self-awareness and pride of the Puerto Rican people as a way of addressing issues of economic development, education, cultural recognition, and social advancement.

The parade up New York's Fifth Avenue, while certainly the most visible aspect of the celebration of the Puerto Rican people, is not the only event associated with the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Inc.'s activities. Each year more than 10,000 people attend a variety of award ceremonies, banquets and cultural events which not only help to highlight, but also strengthen the special relationship shared by Puerto Ricans and the City of New York. Over the years, the two have developed a symbiotic relationship—Puerto Ricans sharing a vibrant and beautiful culture that has helped turn New York into a bilingual city and the City of New York helping Puerto Ricans to flourish economically, politically and culturally. The annual parade captures the spirit of this special relationship and celebrates its success.

Mr. Speaker, as a Puerto Rican, a New Yorker, and a Member of Congress, it is an honor to participate in this national event in which thousands of individuals march along Fifth Avenue in celebration. The National Puerto Rican Day Parade is a communal cultural treasure, national in scope and impact, which unites all New Yorkers. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the Puerto Rican people and to all who have worked to ensure that the upcoming parade is a success.

HONORING HIS MAJESTY KING
BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ OF THAILAND

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 409, commemorating the 60th anniversary of the ascension to the throne of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej ascended the throne on June 9, 1946 and is the longest-serving monarch in the world.

His Majesty King Bhumibol will receive a special Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award from the United Nations Development Agency for his dedication to social justice, growth with equity, human security, democratic governance, and sustainability.

During his reign, Thailand has become a constitutional democracy in which Thai citizens enjoy the right to change their government through periodic free and fair elections held on the basis of universal suffrage.

His Majesty King Bhumibol has always enjoyed a special relationship with the United States, having been born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where his father, Prince Mahidol of Songkla was studying medicine.

The United States and Thailand have enjoyed over 170 years of friendship since the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1833, the first such treaty signed between the United States and any Asian country, and on December 30, 2003, President George W. Bush designated the Kingdom of Thailand as a major non-NATO ally.

Mr. Speaker, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has proudly led the people of Thailand for 60 years. I rise today to offer congratulations to His Majesty King Bhumibol and best wishes for continued health and prosperity to his Majesty and the Kingdom of Thailand as we continue the historic friendship between the Thai and American people.

RECOGNIZING DR. SAMUEL L.
SELINGER

HON. CATHY McMORRIS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Miss McMORRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Samuel L. Selinger for his unwavering dedication to provide access to affordable health care in the Inland Northwest. After a long and prestigious career as a heart surgeon, Dr. Selinger retired and began to volunteer his time and services at a free health clinic. There he experienced first hand the frustrations associated with caring for disadvantaged citizens and took it upon himself to find a better way to provide them with access to health care.

The effort led by Dr. Selinger contributed to the development of a program in Spokane that caters to the health care needs of the low-income population. As a result of his diligent work, in the fall of 2003, Dr. Selinger witnessed the creation of Spokane's own Project Access. Project Access is a national move-

ment of volunteer physicians that organizes free medical care to individuals that have a low income. After starting more than 10 years ago in Buncombe County, North Carolina there are now over 50 Project Access programs across the country that serve the health care needs of people who would normally be unable to obtain such care.

In addition, Dr. Selinger has made it his responsibility to educate the community's medical professionals on the struggles that low income people face in accessing quality health care. Dr. Selinger has made it a priority to help numerous physicians understand how they can be part of the solution by organizing and contributing their services to charitable medical programs for disadvantaged people.

Project Access continues to grow in the Spokane area. Because of its success, largely due to Dr. Selinger's commitment, the Spokane County Medical Society has agreed to sponsor Project Access and help expand the network of physicians in the Inland Northwest. Not only has Dr. Selinger and his tireless work been recognized by Spokane County, but it has also been recognized by distinguished community members, physicians, and private businesses. The impact of Project Access on our community would not be at the level it is today if it were not for the leadership of Dr. Samuel L. Selinger.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Dr. Samuel L. Selinger for his exceptional service to the city of Spokane, and to thank him for the role he has played in providing free or low cost health care to the disadvantaged citizens of Spokane.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK R. KENNEDY

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, had I been in Washington yesterday, June 6, 2006, my votes on the following Rollcalls would have been as follows:

Roll No. 223, King/Campbell—"yes."
Roll No. 224, Kingston—"yes."
Roll No. 225, Table the Appeal of the Ruling of the Chair—"yes."
Roll No. 226, On Passage—"yes."

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CITY OF LIGHTHOUSE POINT

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the wonderful City of Lighthouse Point, Florida. I am proud to have represented the residents of this city for the 26 years I have served in Congress.

Incorporated on June 13, 1956, Lighthouse Point derived its name from its location under the beam of the famed Hillsboro Lighthouse. Armed with a petition signed by over 100 residents favoring incorporation, community leaders traveled to Tallahassee to seek approval. Story has it that 77 names on the petition

were Republicans and they were required to re-register before incorporation approval would be given by the state's Democrat leaders. All 77 agreed to re-register as Independents and incorporation of Lighthouse Point was approved.

In 1956, approximately 150 people resided in the newly incorporated area. Most of these residents had grown up in other parts of the country during the 1920's and 1930's and many had served in WWII. What had originally been farm land was now a network of canals and residential lots providing residents with waterfront living and easy access to the Intra-coastal Waterway and the ocean beyond. It was an idyllic place to make a new life for yourself and your family. In 1956, Dwight Eisenhower was elected President and Leroy Collins was elected Governor of Florida, both for second terms, a first class postage stamp was three cents and Elvis Presley's "Don't Be Cruel" was the number one record.

Today, Lighthouse Point is a thriving community of approximately 10,767 residents. It has moved from services provided by volunteers to a full service city with its own police, fire, and public works departments. Although it has grown dramatically, as has all of South Florida, it has retained its feeling of a small town community. Eighteen miles of canals, parks and numerous recreational activities and special annual events such as Keeper Days and Lighthouse "A" Glow all contribute to the hometown feel of Lighthouse Point. It continues to maintain its heritage and its standard of striving to be the best place to live and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, Lighthouse Point is a jewel in the landscape of South Florida. I am honored to represent the city and her residents in the U.S. House of Representatives. I am also pleased to take this opportunity to recognize and congratulate Lighthouse Point on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SAFE COMMISSION (SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE ECONOMY)

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, few are willing to admit—much less discuss—the looming financial crisis facing our country.

However, the longer we put off fixing the problem, the worse the medicine will be and the greater the number of Americans who will be hurt. We need to begin this conversation with the American people today.

That is why I am introducing legislation to establish a national commission that will put everything—entitlement benefits and all other federal programs as well as our tax policies—on the table and require Congress to vote up or down on its recommendations in their entirety, similar to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) first created by former Rep. Dick Armey in 1988.

This commission would be called the SAFE Commission, to secure America's future economy.

Many will say the problem is too big to be fixed. Some will view the proposal as too risky, particularly in an election year. Others

will say it is an abdication of congressional responsibility.

My response to such comments is that the problem is so great we can no longer look for excuses not to act. Nothing, I believe, is too big to undertake.

Abraham Lincoln, one of our Nation's greatest presidents, once said, "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

Yet that is precisely what we have been doing—avoiding our responsibility to future generations of Americans by passing on a broken system in the form of unfunded Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid obligations. And it's been both sides of the aisle and in both Republican and Democrat administrations.

The growing gap between money that has been promised to future generations in various entitlement programs and that which is available to pay these promised benefits is staggering.

To meet the government's current unfunded promises for future spending, every American—including multimillionaires like Bill Gates and Warren Buffett—would have to hand over 90 percent of their personal net worth in today's dollars. This is unacceptable.

I deeply believe there is a moral component that goes to the heart of who we are as Americans. By that I mean, I wonder if we have lost the national will to make tough decisions that may require sacrifice? Moreover, have we lost the political courage to reject the partisan and special interest demands and do what is best for our country?

If we remember the legacy we have inherited, the debt we owe to previous generations—our grandparents and our parents and the sacrifices they made to make our country what it is today—we all will be moved to do our duty.

The SAFE commission should be embraced by both sides of the aisle. I am open to suggestions about the legislation from members of both parties. This is a national issue; not a Republican issue or a Democrat issue.

A month ago I took a trip to Antietam National Battlefield. As I walked along "Bloody Lane," the site of one of the most vicious battles of the Civil War, I was struck by how many individuals made the ultimate sacrifice.

September 18, 1862 was the bloodiest single day in American history. There were more than 23,000 casualties, nine times as many Americans killed or wounded than in World War II's D-Day on June 6, 1944. More soldiers were killed and wounded at the Battle of Antietam than the deaths of all Americans in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War and Spanish-American War combined.

I also recently visited the site of George Washington's crossing of the Delaware River in anticipation of the Battle of Trenton. Washington was down to only 3,000 soldiers and the war was almost lost. Yet, with great courage—and sacrifice—Washington and his forces were successful in changing the direction of the American Revolution.

And with Memorial Day's recent passing, I think of the tremendous sacrifice being made by the thousands of men and women serving today not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but around the globe. Their families here at home are also making great sacrifices.

These examples of sacrifice for country are what led me to ask just what are we passing on to those who are coming after us?

In two short years, the baby boom generation will begin trickling into retirement. Five years later, that trickle will become a flood that within five more years will become a tsunami that will begin to wreak havoc on our Social Security and Medicare systems.

As we tragically learned the lesson of Katrina in New Orleans, the best time to deal with a damaged flood wall is before the rains begin. Make no mistake; the levies that are our country's entitlement systems can only be plugged for so long. Without major repair and a long-term fix, we are facing a financial disaster like never before.

There is near unanimous agreement by all who have looked at this issue: Social Security and Medicare are amassing huge deficits and are ill-prepared for the coming flood of new baby boom retirees.

When our retirement security programs like Social Security and Medicare were established, the ratio of workers supporting each retiree was more than 10 times the number supporting retirees today. In 1945, there were 42 workers for each retiree. Last year, the ratio dropped to 3 workers for each retiree and is expected to drop to just 2 workers for each retiree by 2030.

The 2006 Social Security Trustees Report paints a grim picture with projections that the Social Security Trust Funds will begin running cash flow deficits in 2017 and be exhausted in 2040—one year sooner than last year's projection. That means that by the year 2040, the projected federal income will only be sufficient to pay 74 percent of scheduled benefits.

Perhaps even more troubling than the Social Security projections are those for Medicare.

By 2010, the trust fund expenditures are projected to exceed annual income from all sources and the reserves will be depleted by 2018, 12 short years from now. According to the trustees, "Medicare's financial outlook has deteriorated dramatically over the past five years and is now much worse than Social Security's."

As a father of five and grandfather of 11—soon to be 12—the challenge posed by the pending retirement of baby boomers strikes me as much more than a routine policy discussion.

Without action, just what kind of future are we leaving to our children and grandchildren?

My youngest grandchild is just two months old. By the time she is 15 years old, 29 cents out of every dollar paid in income taxes will be required to cover the needs of Social Security and Medicare to pay for my retirement. That's not including payroll taxes of almost 15 percent.

By the time she completes her undergraduate degree, more than 45 cents out of every dollar of income taxes then will be needed to cover the shortfall of Social Security and Medicare, rising to 62 cents out of every dollar if she decides to get her doctorate 10 years later. Again, this is on top of payroll taxes.

Sadly, before she retires—and looks into the eyes of her own grandchildren—retired baby boomers will be consuming 88 percent of every income tax dollar. With the baby boomers consuming so much, there will be little money left to meet the needs and challenges of her generation. Not only is this unacceptable, it raises serious moral questions. Is it right for one generation to live very well knowing that its debts will be left to be paid for by their children and grandchildren?